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# PRELIMINARY REPORT

OF THE

*Education*

# COMMITTEE OF FIFTEEN

**Appointed by the State Superintendent  
of Schools to Investigate Educational  
Needs and Conditions in Wisconsin.**

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ISSUED BY

**C. P. CARY, State Superintendent**

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“It is easy to ridicule the country school. \* \* \* The present rural schools, with all their shortcomings, are good schools because (1) they are already in existence, (2) they are the schools of all the people, (3) they are small and thereby likely to be native and simple, (4) they are many and therefore close to the actual conditions of the people.”

L. H. BAILEY *in The State and the Farmer.*

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## FOREWORD.

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The Committee of Fifteen was appointed by the state superintendent of schools immediately after the close of the last legislature. It was appointed principally for the reason that the state superintendent felt that it was highly desirable to have public attention centered more upon common school education than it had been in the past. He also had the feeling that in the legislature there was relatively too much attention given to the demands of higher education and too little to the common schools. He hoped that the investigations of such a committee, composed of men and women as capable as any to be found in the state to perform this particular function, would have weight with the public and weight with the next legislature. The creation of such a committee was not authorized by law and the members have served without pay. I think it will be agreed that the public owes to this committee a respectful hearing. They are men and women who know Wisconsin conditions and know as well as anybody can know what ought to be done to remedy evils. Their views are set forth in terse language, easily understood. I commend the report most heartily therefore to the friends of the country school in our state. I have not been a member of this committee; I have not written any part of the report; I have not even suggested anything that should be written into it. I take this public means of thanking the committee for its painstaking and thoughtful work in the public interest. The committee will be continued and this report may be considered as only a portion of the public service the committee will render.

C. P. CARY,  
State Superintendent.

Madison, Wisconsin,  
December 27, 1912.

“The present enormous chasm between the ignorant and the intelligent, caused by the unequal distribution of knowledge, is the worst evil under which society labors.”

—LESTER F. WARD *in Dynamic Sociology.*

## INTRODUCTION.

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BY STATE SUPERINTENDENT, C. P. CARY.

The past decade is a period in which there has been unexampled, if not feverish, activity in the study of all sorts of problems of social life the civilized world over. No phase of life has escaped attention. The lime light has been turned upon country life and country conditions as never before. A good deal of this effort to learn about and to improve country life has originated in the colleges, universities and cities. The country as such has not in general reached any acute stage of selfconsciousness. The people on the outside who wish to improve the country may be influenced in some cases by motives of self-interest.

There are, however, many farsighted men, who have no ax to grind, but who see clearly that we must be alert to prevent the degeneracy that has fallen upon country life in some of the older sections of our country. Deterioration over rural areas is a slow and generally unobserved process. Progress is more noticeable where progress is the order of the day, but even here the change is usually slow and is only noted by the careful observer.

Wisconsin is still young and flourishing and our country population is making more or less steady progress. It is of the utmost importance that every good citizen of the state whether a resident of the country or the city, should devote thought and energy to the problem of keeping country life attractive, wholesome and progressive. In some portions of the east we are told, the dairy industry, just now so flourishing and profitable with us, has carried off the cream of their soil in the form of dairy products. It will do the same with us in the course

of time if we do not look constantly to the building up of the land and the preservation of its fertility.

In some portions of our state the farms are already falling into the hands of renters with short leases, whose self-interest requires not the slow building up of the soil but the skimming of the cream from the soil. Gradually, one by one, farmers in the older settled portions of the state are leaving the land and moving into the city in order that their children may secure an education and they themselves have the advantage of more congenial social surroundings. Such changes are to some extent inevitable, but the better the social conditions in the country, including schools, churches and the like, the less tendency there is for such changes to take place.

Our students of society tell us that in many of the older sections of the United States the active, restless, brainy young men and women have for the past three or four generations gone west or moved into the cities. As a result where this has happened the majority of those who remain are sluggish, inert, unambitious and unprogressive. Professor Ross of the University of Wisconsin who made a study of some of these depleted regions, says, "In such districts the children are, in general, so listless that they have to be incited to play. \* \* \* Outsiders agree that the average farmer accomplishes no more in three days than an active, bright man can do in one day." In another connection he says in picturesque phraseology, "The pond is fished out and only the bull-heads and suckers remain." Such a population as that just described can never feed the world, build roads, develop churches, foster schools or regenerate itself. The yeast is out of it. The ferment trickles away as rapidly as it is produced. Wisconsin must be preserved from such a fate in the years to come.

Our present farming population has in it great quantities of the leaven that will leaven the whole lump if given a chance. Great numbers of our people are eager for improved farms, improved roads, improved churches, improved schools, and improved social life. The leaven is working everywhere. The brainy men and women have by no means all gone from the soil in our state. Every day I meet men from the country who are the equals of the men I meet in the city. They are carrying on scientific farming operations; they are raising blooded stock;



they are improving the soil; they are improving the social life; they are the saving salt of country life. May their tribe never grow less. What our capable young people want is opportunity, and opportunity is what the present generation owes to the next.

Thus far the country has been regarded by many as a good place to be born in and to spend the years of childhood in, but not a place to remain in for one's life work. The city has been the place of opportunity in the past. Country life has been regarded as slow, poky and lacking in social stimulus; it has been looked upon as unscientific, rule of thumb; it has been isolated, and too often dreary; its gossip has not been about world affairs, but too often about the petty affairs of neighbors, the weather, and the petty savings in not merely luxuries, but even the necessities of life.

Changes have been rapidly occurring, particularly in the past ten years. The change does not affect one phase of country life alone, but all in greater or less degree. Better country school conditions and better general conditions go together. The more farm prosperity the more money for schools, the more time for children to go to school, and the greater the desire of parents to give their children an educational opportunity. Increase of prosperity means better roads, better churches, better food, better physicians, less crowded conditions in the home, less worry about the wolf at the door. The improvement of country schools keeps pace with but can not greatly outrun other sorts of general improvements.

Great changes for the better have taken place in country education in the past ten years. Hundreds of districts—nearly five out of every six the state over as a matter of fact—have provided ventilation by means of ventilating stoves. They have put the outbuildings into decent shape; they have added supplementary readers, maps, blackboards; they have increased the number of books in their libraries by 200%; and have furnished cases and card catalogues for them; they have increased the expenditure of money per child enrolled by 100%; they have increased the school year from seven months to eight; they have increased the annual compulsory period for each child by 100%; they have added agriculture to the school course as prescribed by law; they have increased the number of county training schools from three to twenty-seven,

and increased the course of training 100% in point of time. High schools have awakened and are vying with the county training schools, as are also the state normals, in the training of country teachers.

School board members by thousands in the aggregate have come out every year for the past eight years to school board conventions, and their interest constantly increases. There are more calls for good teachers, more evening programs in which adults take part, more demand for work in the school relating to life on the farm than ever before. Much more in the same strain might truthfully be said. But let us turn abruptly from the optimistic to the less welcome aspect of the country school problem.

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There is not one country school problem—there are many. They are all easily comprehended, and are understood by all school men who have come into vital contact with country life.

The most fundamental difficulty of all may be stated as follows:

*With many noteworthy exceptions, it may be said that in a given school district there are too many people who support the school in their community in a half-hearted way. They do not appreciate as fully as they should what it costs in time, money, effort and good will to make the school of vital significance in the life of the community.*

In such districts there are usually a few who greatly desire to improve the local school, but they meet with so many discouragements, and are so frequently outvoted in their efforts to bring the school to the higher level that they often weary in well doing. A united community is the prerequisite of a good school.

The problem in such a case is to educate the community to the extent that all or a majority will be willing to co-operate heartily in the improvement of the school. When this fundamental difficulty is removed in any given district, certain results follow:

1. First and most fundamental of all, the community is ready and willing to pay a good salary for a good teacher. The board is encouraged to search for a teacher who is capa-

ble, not only of giving instruction in the usual branches taught in the school, but who is also capable of developing the moral nature of the children, of cultivating right ideals of good citizenship, and of developing community interest and co-operation among the adults. Such a person is usually a man or woman of considerable maturity, experience and training. As people are constantly passing out of the business of teaching, there must of course be a constant influx of inexperienced people, but districts that are fully awake to the needs of the situation are not likely to take young people who have had no training for the business of teaching.

2. In the second place, a school district that is bent upon having a good school will encourage the board in furnishing the necessary equipment for the school. Usually this equipment is not expensive, but it does involve the provision for ventilation, proper seating, proper lighting, a sufficient supply of maps, supplementary readers, and other materials usually involving but little cost.

3. In such a district the people will be alert to see that all children have an opportunity to go to school, or if necessary, that the compulsory education law is complied with.

4. If a district is weak, either financially or in school population, the district will be willing, if such a plan is feasible, to consolidate with nearby districts for the purpose of building up a strong central school.

5. The school district that is sufficiently awake to its needs will desire to have the country school carry on its work of instruction so as to be of most benefit to pupils whose homes are in the country as contrasted with the city, and whose natural interests are in country life. To do this successfully requires a type of teacher and a type of professional training at present rather uncommon.

6. Districts of the type above described will be eager to have thorough and adequate supervision of their schools by a competent officer whose business it is to perform this important public service.

It will be readily understood that any lack of appreciation of the value of education, any lack of ability on the part of the people to discriminate between a good teacher and a poor teacher, any lack of harmony in the district, is more or less fatal to the well being of the school. The Committee of Fifteen

has well said that our main problem is to get communities to act for themselves. This means a good working majority in every community favorable to a good school and willing to make the necessary sacrifices to secure it. Where local interest is at a low ebb, missionary work is required. The only alternative is for the state to step in and make use of the iron hand of central authority.

There can be no question that in a democracy it is more in conformity with our ideals and doubtless better in the long run to educate communities up to their duty rather than to compel them by external authority to give their children the educational opportunities they need. This theory, however, need not be carried to extremes, but may be reversed in aggravated cases, since the state is always more concerned about the proper education of its young than any other one function it has to perform. The duty to see that the rising generation is properly educated is fundamental, and in the last analysis the responsibility of the state can not be shifted. It is the duty of the state to make all necessary provision for the adequate training of teachers, for aid to weak districts, for general supervision of schools, for condemnation of unsuitable buildings, for educational enlightenment and stimulus to communities, and for wise educational leadership generally. The problem of giving all or the vast majority of country children good educational facilities is one that can never be solved by educational spasms, the hasty introduction of new subjects or educational fads, or by ear window investigations. It means principally a wise and persistent campaign of education among the adults. In its broadest sweep it means not the effort of a day or a decade, but of a generation.

The work of school board conventions in the past eight years has accomplished wonders in this direction, but it reaches not more than one in twenty of the people that need to be reached. The office at Madison is much in need of more help: the county superintendents are in need of more help. The coming legislature can aid in these particulars and a number of others, if it is kindly disposed.

## PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF FIFTEEN.

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HON. C. P. CARY,

*State Superintendent of Public Instruction,*  
Madison, Wisconsin.

DEAR SIR:—Your committee appointed to study the school situation in Wisconsin, and suggest ways and means for increasing the efficiency of the schools has held several meetings during the past year. As an outcome of our investigations and deliberations, we submit to you at this time a preliminary report containing suggestions which may be of value in outlining certain general policies which, if they can be carried out, will, we believe, result in the betterment of our school system. The suggestions may be divided into two groups: (1) those which have to do with legislation; and, (2) those which have to do with educational activities among the people themselves.

### *Preliminary discussion and conclusions reached.*

The first meeting of the committee was held in October, 1911, at which all members were present, as follows:

Miss Rose Cheney  
Mr. A. H. Christman  
Mr. George F. Comings  
President F. A. Cotton  
Hon. John S. Donald  
Supt. Leo P. Fox  
Mr. Charles L. Hill  
Prof. F. S. Hyer  
Prin. M. H. Jackson  
Inspector W. E. Larson  
Hon. A. H. Long  
Supt. Ellen B. McDonald  
Prof. M. V. O'Shea  
Prof. C. E. Patzer  
Hon. Geo. E. Scott

Before effecting an organization, the members discussed educational matters in a general way in order to determine the proper method of procedure, as well as to ascertain what the committee could do that would be of the greatest benefit to the schools of the state. The conclusions reached as a result of this discussion were as follows:

1. The work of this committee should not be primarily to carry on any detailed investigation of schools. We have now sufficient data relating to general educational conditions in the state, particularly with reference to the rural schools. Every member of the committee has had more or less direct contact with the schools. Seven of the members have as county superintendents come into close relation with school work in all its phases. Three members have had opportunity to study educational conditions and needs as teachers in county training schools. As instructors in high schools, many have had an opportunity to study the weaknesses of both elementary and secondary schools. Some members have been on school boards, and have looked at school problems from that angle. Most of the members of the committee have had experience as workers in teachers' institutes or in farmers' institutes, and have had opportunities to observe school conditions in various parts of the state. All the members have thus been brought more or less intimately into contact with the country schools. In fact, the committee feels that the experience and observation of its various members cover practically all the educational interests of the state. Statistical data, sufficiently adequate for the work of the committee, can be obtained from the records already made, or gathered through the state superintendent's office.

2. The work of this committee should be chiefly to study ways and means of improving the schools; to devise methods by which educational interest may be aroused; to suggest what may be done for the betterment of schools through legislation; in brief, to outline a campaign for educational improvement, and to determine the best methods of bringing about such improvement.

3. In this work the committee realizes that it has an important and a difficult task. The interests of the people must always be kept in mind. School people often fall into the habit of thinking that the school is an institution which exists for its own sake. It is difficult to get the proper view-point, and see the school in its relation to life. The committee, therefore, while try-



ing to suggest educational improvement *for* the people, will constantly keep in mind that it is *of* the people, and thus represent their best interests.

*Criticisms of the schools by the people.*

In this preliminary discussion the rural school inspector called the attention of the committee to the circular blanks which had been sent out two or three months before by the state superintendent, asking for criticisms and suggestions regarding the schools. About five hundred of these blanks were returned. A summary of the answers showed that, in the opinion of those who replied, the greatest weaknesses of our country schools are the following:

1. There are too many weak, inefficient, untrained teachers. Many of them are city girls who have no knowledge of rural life, and no interest in its development. As a rule, they are impractical, and do not know the difference between essentials and non-essentials. The weaker ones offer to teach for low wages, thereby keeping the better ones out of the work.

2. In many cases there is ignorance, lack of interest, and lack of co-operation on the part of the parents. Frequently parents take the part of the children against their teachers.

3. Cases have been cited where inefficient school officers neglect their duties. This results in poor, unbusinesslike management of the schools. Such officers take little interest in the school and in the progress of the children. They hire the cheapest teachers and neglect keeping the school sanitary and properly equipped.

4. There is much irregular attendance. In many cases the average daily attendance is but one-half of the enrollment. There is not a strict enough enforcement of the compulsory attendance law.

5. There is a lack of proper supervision.

6. Many schools are too small. In such schools it is difficult to get good teachers. The interest on the part of children and of parents is small. The attendance in these schools is usually irregular and children leave school too young.

7. There is a lack of thorough work in the fundamentals. Schools try to cover too much ground. Children are pushed too fast in their studies.

8. Children do not stay in school long enough. Many parents can not send their children to higher schools, and, besides, it is a questionable policy to send children away from home at an early age.

*Suggestions made by the people.*

Among the suggestions most frequently given on the same blanks were the following:

1. Train the teachers for the work in country schools. Do not let them teach before they are trained for this work.
2. Pay the good, efficient teachers higher wages.
3. Enforce the compulsory attendance law.
4. Stir up interest in educational matters by means of parents' meetings, debating societies, farmers' clubs, school entertainments, etc. Make the school a social and civic center.
5. Secure better supervision.
6. Do more thorough work in the fundamentals. Make the school work more practical. Adapt the work to the needs of the community.
7. Consolidate the schools where they are small, and where it is feasible.

*Helpful forces mentioned.*

Among the helpful forces at work for the improvement of the country school the following were mentioned:

1. The school board conventions.
2. Special state aid for country schools.
3. The compulsory attendance law.
4. The county training schools for country teachers.
5. Public meetings of various kinds. Farmers' clubs.
6. Strong work of the county superintendent in organizing educational forces and stirring up interest in educational matters.
7. Teachers' meetings, institutes, etc.

The above summary shows that those who answered the questionnaire have made a good diagnosis of the educational situation. It may also be mentioned that the replies sent in called attention to many good things that are being done in some of our country schools. The fact that there are good schools is of the greatest importance. It is our duty to find the strong points as well as the



weak ones, in order that we may know what remedies to apply to remove the defects.

*The needs of the country schools.*

After a full discussion, it seemed to the Committee that its work should be determined by the following needs:

1. The need of stronger teachers, especially in our country schools. Ways and means ought to be devised by which better prepared teachers can be secured.

2. There is need of better supervision.

3. There are in the State a great number of small schools. In many instances, these schools should be combined so that better teachers can be secured, and better work done.

4. A campaign needs to be conducted, in order to get the people interested in educational matters. One of the principal remedies suggested is using the school as a social and civic center.

5. Children are leaving school too early. Provision ought to be made wherever possible for higher school work in country communities.

The foregoing five needs seemed to be the most pressing ones. Many others were also mentioned, among which were school attendance, a more equitable distribution (levy) of school taxes, more money for the elementary schools, courses of study adapted to the needs of the community, provision for the education of the children who live beyond the two-mile limit, a minimum salary law for teachers, etc.

*Organization of the committee.*

After this preliminary discussion, the Committee proceeded to effect an organization. Mr. A. H. Christman was elected chairman, and Mr. W. E. Larson, secretary. Sub-committees were appointed to work out the problems mentioned above, and to report at subsequent meetings. The following sub-committees were named:

1. CONSOLIDATION. President F. A. Cotton, Prof. M. V. O'Shea, and Mr. W. E. Larson.

This committee was instructed to prepare material for a bulletin on the subject of consolidation, and to make recommendations.

2. PREPARATION AND QUALIFICATION OF TEACHERS. Mr. C. E. Patzer, Ellen McDonald, and Hon. J. S. Donald.

This committee was instructed to suggest changes in our present certification laws, and to make recommendations toward the establishment of a permanent system for the training of teachers.

3. SUPERVISION. Mr. W. E. Larson, Mr. L. P. Fox, and Mr. F. S. Hyer.

4. SOCIAL CENTER MOVEMENT. Miss Ellen B. McDonald, Miss Rose Cheney, and Mr. Geo. Comings.

5. HIGHER EDUCATION FOR COUNTRY COMMUNITIES. Mr. M. H. Jackson, Mr. Charles L. Hill, and Mr. Geo. E. Scott.

#### SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the first meeting of the Committee, other meetings have been held as follows: In November, 1911; May, 1912, and September, 1912. At these meetings, the sub-committees have made reports which have been discussed and acted upon. As a result of the deliberations, the Committee submits the following:

##### 1. *Consolidation.*

The bulletin on consolidation of schools has been prepared and submitted to you. In this bulletin we have compiled information that we believe will be of value to the people of the state. In preparing it the present laws of the State have been kept in mind. We have found that under the laws as they now stand, consolidation can be effected only in a cumbersome way, and so we make the following recommendations:

(a) The present law relative to the changing of district boundaries should be simplified. We believe it would be a better plan to have a County Board of Education, which would have matters of this kind in charge. Such a Board would be a more permanent body, and could decide upon these changes from a broader viewpoint than is possible under the present arrangement. The result of this change would be that it would be possible then to do some definite constructive work in building up school centers.

(b) The existing law, providing for the transportation of pupils, should be changed. At present, the law does not compel the establishment of transportation routes in case consolidation is effected. The law should be so framed that the people would

be guaranteed a safe system of transportation in case several districts are united.

(c) The State should provide in some way for a fund to be used for transportation purposes. At present, special state aid for transportation is taken out of the apportionment to the common schools. The transportation of school children is an important phase of rural-school education, and the State should recognize its importance by providing special funds for the purpose.

(d) In some cases, where the attendance falls below a certain point, and where it is possible to make provision for the children to attend neighboring schools, consolidation should be made compulsory. Provision for arranging the details in such cases could be put into the hands of the County Board of Education.

(e) Instead of offering special State aid, depending upon the number of children transported, there ought to be made a provision for the payment of a definite sum to the consolidated district, such sum to be determined somewhat by the size of the district, or of the school.

## *2. The preparation of teachers.*

In regard to the phase of the problem dealing with the preparation of teachers for country schools, the Committee makes the following recommendations:

(a) After January 1st, 1915, no teacher should be permitted to teach in any public school in the State who shall not have had at least a year of professional training. No person should be admitted to this course who shall not have had at least the equivalent of two years of high-school work. This provision, however, should not affect the teachers who are in the service at the time this provision would go into effect.

(b) The Committee recognizes the importance of the County Training Schools for teachers. In them is found the professional atmosphere necessary for the proper training of the country-school teachers. There are now twenty-seven county training schools in the state. To carry out the suggestion, made in (a), it would be necessary in the next few years to organize an additional number of such schools; for, while normal schools also train teachers for country schools, they will hardly be able to meet the larger demands if all teachers must have a minimum of a year of professional training.

(c) The Committee recommends that the Normal Schools modify their courses of study so as to meet the needs of those students who are preparing to become principals of state graded schools.

(d) The Committee recommends that the certification law be so amended that the summer schools for teachers may be better able to meet the needs of country teachers, both from the academic and the professional point of view.

To any one who has made a study of the country school problem, it is evident that only qualified and mature teachers should be engaged to teach in the one-room country school; but just the reverse is true. The teachers of the one-room country schools are the most poorly prepared and the most immature of all teachers. In 1909 a law was put on the statute books requiring a minimum professional training for all teachers. This law makes it necessary for every applicant for a third-grade certificate, in addition to passing an examination in the subjects required by law, to attend a professional school for teachers for at least six weeks to pursue a course of study in school management and in the methods of teaching reading, language, arithmetic, and geography.

This was an important forward step, for it established by law the principle that teaching, even in a country school, is a profession, and that special training is necessary to equip teachers for their work.

The certification measure of 1909 is a good law, but it should be amended in such a way as to require young teachers to devote their time in summer schools to the subjects they are expected to teach. After the applicants for a third-grade certificate have attended their first summer school, and have taught a year on their first certificate, the law is rather a handicap than a help. It provides that after the first year, holders of third-grade certificates may renew their certificates by attending a second summer school and securing credits in two subjects. This provision has been interpreted to mean that holders of third-grade certificates, in order to secure a renewal, must take work in second or first-grade subjects, and secure credits in any two subjects. Second-year summer-school students have therefore invariably taken up two or three second-grade subjects, by means of which they not only secured a renewal of the third-grade certificate for a

year, but gained standings that applied on a second-grade certificate as well. In other words, the law, after the first year, requires the teachers to work for second and first-grade certificates, the branches of which are only remotely connected with their work as teachers.

It is therefore suggested that the law be changed in such a way that teachers who have taught a year be required to renew their third-grade certificate by attending a professional school for teachers, and selecting four subjects from the list of those they are required to teach, in three of which passing marks must be secured. This, it is hoped, will result in a better academic and professional knowledge of these subjects, and hence will improve the teaching in country schools.

In order that the applicant for the first renewal of his certificate may pursue the studies that will best prepare him for his work, suggestions from the county superintendents in whose county the applicant may have taught should be invited. This first renewal of a third-grade certificate might be designated as a "Third Grade B" certificate.

The "Third Grade B" certificate should be made renewable by requiring the applicant to attend a professional school for teachers another term, again selecting subjects from the list of those he is required to teach. This second renewal should be for a period of two years, and might be designated as "Third Grade A."

Any person holding or having held a "Third Grade A" certificate should be allowed to secure a second-grade certificate by attending two terms of nine weeks each of a summer school, or two terms of a normal school, and securing passing marks in American and English Literature, Composition, Physical Geography, and Pedagogy. This certificate should be valid for three years.

Any person holding a second grade certificate should secure a first grade certificate by attending a professional school for teachers and securing passing marks in English History, Algebra, Geometry and Physics, and securing final credits in these subjects, or by taking an examination in these subjects, conducted by the county superintendent of schools. This certificate should be valid for six years.

If the above recommendations were enacted into law, it would have the effect of centering the attention of teachers the first

few years on the subjects they are required to teach, and thus tend to create a professional attitude toward these subjects, and dignify them in the eyes of the teacher.

When the certification measure of 1909 was placed on the statute books, it was understood that it was only a temporary measure that was to pave the way for a law which would demand, as a minimum preparation to teach, a year of professional training, and that at least the equivalent of two years' high school work should be demanded as preliminary to taking this professional training. The committee therefore recommends that after 1915 these additional requirements be demanded, and that meanwhile more county training schools be organized, so that the supply of trained teachers may meet the increased demand.

### 3. *Country school supervision.*

The supervision of the country schools is far from what it should be. No one recognizes this more than the county superintendents themselves. We are submitting herewith a table which gives the status of the county superintendency in the State of Wisconsin :



County	Area of County	Number of School Buildings	Number of Teachers	School Census 1911	Salary	Special appropriation for office assistant or deputy	Special appropriation for diploma examination
Adams.....	682	86	88	2,970	900	None	None
Ashland.....	930	64	67	2,577	950	None	None
Barron.....	878	141	182	9,982	1,100	400	None
Bayfield.....	1,197	80	116	4,329	900	600	None
Brown.....	518	87	110	9,733	1,000	None	None
Buffalo.....	662	92	123	5,791	900	None	50
Burnett.....	881	77	88	3,438	1,000	None	None
Calumet.....	317	67	95	5,826	1,100	None	60
Chippewa.....	1,002	134	157	7,102	1,000	420	
Clark.....	1,200	152	226	11,659	1,200	360	None
Columbia.....	776	148	200	7,329	1,350	None	25
Crawford.....	557	103	130	4,637	1,200	None	None
Dane 1st.....	1,188	126	174	8,182	900	150	50
Dane 2d.....		129	180	7,336	900	100	50
Dodge.....	884	189	236	11,744	1,400	None	100
Door.....	454	66	76	5,386	1,100	None	None
Douglas.....	1,319	81	89	2,508	1,200	None	None
Dunn.....	844	135	162	7,335	1,000	400	
Eau Claire.....	620	85	112	5,005	900	None	25
Florence.....	498	15	31	1,231	240	None	None
Fond du Lac.....	720	105	197	9,098	1,050	300	125
Forest.....	1,424	33	65	2,347	800	None	
Grant.....	1,157	235	351	12,087	1,500	600	None
Green.....	576	126	150	4,973	1,200	300	Act. Exp.
Green Lake.....	364	71	96	3,834	1,200	None	None
Iowa.....	763	126	187	6,220	1,050	100	100
Iron.....	786	32	67	2,786	500	None	None
Jackson.....	978	106	145	5,887	1,000	None	50
Jefferson.....	548	147	178	7,193	1,200	100	25
Juneau.....	790	112	173	6,846	1,200	100	None
Kenosha.....	274	65	79	3,783	1,200	None	None
Kewaunee.....	327	60	67	6,068	900	None	None
La Crosse.....	475	71	88	4,100	1,300	None	None
La Fayette.....	634	129	195	6,413	1,000	200	None
Langlade.....	855	80	90	3,917	1,000		None
Lincoln.....	885	77	83	2,836	1,200		None
Manitowoc.....	590	110	135	19,910	1,500	350	Act. Exp.
Marathon.....	1,532	200	242	15,685	2,000	600	65
Marinette.....	1,396	95	133	6,615	1,200	200	None
Marquette.....	451	64	92	3,908	1,000	None	
Milwaukee.....	228	74	183	12,074	1,750	None	None
Monroe.....	915	154	223	9,184	1,000	100	None
Oconto.....	1,080	96	128	8,112	1,350	225	
Oneida.....	900	59	66	1,924	1,200		
Outagamie.....	684	127	151	9,606	1,200	180	
Ozaukee.....	206	59	93	6,008	900	None	
Pepin.....	238	41	58	2,708	600	None	None
Pierce.....	543	112	167	7,365	1,000	140	
Polk.....	933	119	165	8,165	1,000	175	None
Portage.....	800	123	143	8,669	900	None	None
Price.....	1,241	92	139	5,142	900	None	None
Racine.....	323	77	112	5,525	1,200	None	None
Richland.....	576	123	163	6,265	1,000	350	150
Rock.....	706	171	240	8,304	1,800	600	100
Rusk.....	906	74	102	3,421	1,000	25	None
St. Croix.....	711	127	185	8,255	1,100	100	75
Sauk.....	820	167	198	7,982	1,200	450	200
Sawyer.....	1,342	43	71	2,145	600	None	None
Shawano.....	1,135	121	180	11,335	1,200	None	None
Sheboygan.....	510	113	194	9,704	1,200	300	50
Taylor.....	965	89	125	5,319	1,200	360	75
Trempealeau.....	734	118	170	8,092	900	None	None
Vernon.....	792	155	189	9,104	1,200	50	None
Vilas.....	907	30	53	1,545	600	None	None
Walworth.....	562	118	193	6,375	1,000	250	50
Washburn.....	834	78	100	3,399	1,000	None	None
Washington.....	423	98	141	7,877	1,200	100	125
Waukesha.....	562	117	160	7,874	1,200	300	100
Waupaca.....	749	136	186	9,271	1,200	175	None
Waushara.....	639	111	149	6,274	900	None	None
Winnebago.....	472	110	118	5,159	1,100	200	20
Wood.....	785	103	129	6,938	1,200	None	
Total for state...	54,193	7,496	10,119	467,723	77,590	9,360	1,970
Average per county.....	752	104	140	6,496	1,077	267	82

NOTE.—Since the above table as compiled the following changes have been made:  
Columbia County: The County Board at its November session voted an appropriation large enough to provide a clerk for nine months.  
Dane County, 1st District: Salary increased to \$1,200. No appropriation for clerk hire. Appropriation for diploma examinations, \$50.  
Dunn County: Salary increased to \$1,200. Appropriation for diploma examination \$38.  
Eau Claire County: Appropriation for clerk hire \$50.  
Langlade County: Salary increased to \$1,200.  
Lincoln County: Appropriation for clerk hire and incidentals, \$100.  
Oconto County: Appropriation for office assistance increase ditto \$300.  
Polk County: Appropriation for office assistance increased to \$300. Appropriation for diploma examination \$100.  
St. Croix County: Appropriation for office assistance increased to \$350.  
Washington County: Salary increased to \$1,300.  
Waupaca County: Salary increased to \$1,500.  
Waushara County: Appropriation for office assistance \$50.  
All changes in salary take effect July 1, 1913.

It may be well, in this connection, to call attention to the work in the County Superintendent's office. The following are some of his duties:

(a) Visit the schools under his supervision. Inspect the buildings, grounds, and equipment. Advise with the teachers and school officers.

(b) Hold teachers' examinations; mark the papers and grant certificates.

(c) Hold diploma examinations and grant diplomas. In some counties, additional aid has been provided for this purpose.

(d) Hold teachers' institutes and meetings of various kinds.

(e) Select library books for the various districts in his county.

(f) Make an annual report to the County Board.

(g) Make an annual report to the State Superintendent, and any special reports that may be called for. Special reports are required regarding schools that receive special state aid.

(h) Do all that he can to stimulate interest in educational matters by means of meetings, letters, newspaper articles, etc.

(i) Receive reports from teachers regarding children who attend school irregularly, and report the same to the truant officer and to the industrial commission.

It will be apparent from the foregoing table that it is impossible for the county superintendent ordinarily to do his work as it should be done. In only about half of the counties have special appropriations been made for clerical help. It is impossible to do all the work that is outlined and give the schools adequate supervision. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the necessity of having the schools properly supervised. The position of county superintendent is the most important in rural education. He is the educational leader of the county. Upon his



leadership depends largely the progress of the schools. It seems to the Committee that this important position is not regarded as highly as it should be by the public. We believe that the present system does not enable the people to get at this problem in the way that they should. The candidates virtually nominate themselves, so that the people really have little opportunity to select candidates who are especially fitted for the position. It seems to us that the people would have more power over educational affairs if they would have a County Board to look after this important work. This Board could be selected by the people, and in this way represent their interests. If this Board were empowered to select the superintendent and fix his salary, the people would have an opportunity to secure persons who are especially fitted for this work and to retain them when found efficient. Under the present system, the people are unable to retain superintendents in case they are offered better salaries in other positions.

We therefore recommend that the people of the county be given the power to select a County Board of Education, whose duty it shall be to supervise the larger educational interests of the county.

#### 4. *Arousing interest in education.*

One of the most important phases of the educational program is that which deals with getting the people interested in school. If the people become genuinely interested in education, it will be comparatively easy to make improvements. Recognizing that this feature is an important one, a sub-committee was appointed to make a special study of this work, and their report follows:

“The committee on making the school a social center has found it a most interesting subject and filled with possibilities for the rural school.

Our pioneer grandparents tell us of the good old days when the school was so much better than the school of the present; of the attention given to the three R's; of the spelling bees, singing schools, and various contests.

We realize now that the success of the old-time school was due not so much to the attention given the three R's, as to its hold upon the community.

The great need of more social life in the country is evident; our schools are the one agency that reaches every home. Therefore our schools must make their own the problem of the social center for the community.

From questionnaires sent out to county superintendents and training school principals we have learned that many things are being done at the present time to make the school a social and civic center. School contests of various kinds are being held in the rural schools, such as spelling, writing, arithmetic, corn growing and corn judging, etc. School clubs have been organized in other places. Literary societies are found in many school districts. School programs of various kinds have been held in various parts of the state.

The committee has taken up the work of preparing a bulletin containing suggestions for teachers and others who wish to enter into this great movement. The committee agreed that while the school is to be the center, the teacher must not bear the whole burden. Indeed, as the teacher is only a temporary resident the movement must become self-active if it is to live.

The committee recommends:

1. That the use of the schoolhouse as a social center for the community be encouraged.
2. That all such use of the schoolhouse be under the direction of the school board, as they are responsible for the condition of the building.

The committee has in preparation a bulletin, to contain reports of what has been done in this field and offering suggestions for social center work. It suggests the following means:

Make the school a social center by means of

- a. The course of study.

Make the school work touch the home; select, cure and test seed corn, not only as a school lesson but for the home; teach real farm arithmetic; plaster and paint real houses; write letters for home, ordering supplies or whatever is necessary; and give school credits for such work.

- b. The social activities of the pupils.

Spelling clubs, sewing clubs, reading clubs, and the like all furnish a motive for social gatherings. They lead toward the school instead of away.

- c. The school as a meeting place for all gatherings, such as

farmers' meetings, farmers' clubs, socials or community observance of special days, as Memorial Day.

d. A teacher who is a leader and who understands community life."

These meetings and gatherings of one kind or another are of great value in awakening the people to a realization of what can be done in country communities. They are valuable to the children themselves in that they furnish an opportunity for them to appear before audiences and thus develop their powers of expression. Such training is one of the greatest essentials of an education. Besides, these meetings do much to keep the older people in touch with the young, thus conserving that sympathy which is essential to happiness in the home. Again, these meetings have a tendency to bring about co-operation among the people. This co-operation will be beneficial not only in an educational way, but it will eventually result in the economic and social betterment of rural communities.

##### *5. Higher education in country communities.*

The committee has not discussed to any extent that phase of the educational question dealing with the higher education. That better facilities should be provided for country children to continue their mental development is evident to all. On every hand we hear it said that the children leave school too young. To send children away from home at an early age is also a great disadvantage. Many parents can not afford to do so even if they have the desire. Besides, when the children are sent to the cities for their education, they are placed in an environment that becomes a strong factor in leading them from the country.

The first suggestion made by the committee is that we do all we can to develop the educational centers we already have. The plan of the state department of education to increase the efficiency of the state graded schools and make them centers is a good one. As these schools grow in numbers and in interest higher grades may be added. We suggest that the work in these grades be of such a nature that it will tend to increase the interest of the child in home life rather than try to fit into the course of study of some high school.

Under the law provision is made for the establishment of country high schools. These schools should be so run that they meet

as far as possible the needs of the community. The course of study should be so administered that the work will have a tendency to awaken in the students a desire to enter into the activities of home life. The suggestion given above to make use of the centers we already have is again applicable. Many of the high schools now organized are really country high schools, and these should be filled with the spirit of country life. Where no high school facilities are available, new schools should be established.

We believe that in many schools it would be well to establish short courses. Many young people can not enter school in September and continue until June because of the labor on the farm. If a class were organized in November to continue until April, thousands of our best boys and girls would receive untold advantages. The additional cost would be slight when compared with the benefits to be derived. Young people who have to help their parents with the regular work of the home get a training that is invaluable. Could this training be supplemented by that of a good practical school, we should have as a result a remarkable increase in rural efficiency.

The objection might be made that this scheme would break up the regularity of the school work. We contend that it is the duty of the school to accommodate itself to the conditions as they are, and to serve every useful purpose possible. We can afford to have irregularities if we can secure results.

It might also be possible here and there in rural communities to make some provisions for evening schools. We have had such in the past. During the present year continuation schools have been established in the cities. We believe it might be possible at certain rural centers to organize some schools of this kind when other opportunities are not available.

#### *Other matters needing attention.*

We desire in this report to call attention to a few other matters that need to be studied in order that proper remedies may be applied.

1. The school district is too small an area in which to levy taxes. We find school districts that have an assessed valuation of \$20,000 or less, and others that have as much as a quarter of a million. Very often some of these districts with the small valu-

ation have to raise the largest amount of local tax. The result is that the tax rate in some districts is very high, while in others it is very low. To remedy this inequality we believe a larger tax unit should be adopted, preferably the county. This would equalize the tax burden over a larger area.

2. The present compulsory attendance law does not affect families that live more than two miles from school. Many parents, it is true, send their children to school, although the law does not compel them to do so. Nevertheless, there are children who grow up without getting the necessary schooling. It is the duty of the state to provide educational facilities in some way for all children. Consequently, the compulsory attendance law should be amended.

3. A study of the work to be done in the state superintendent's office shows that there is not adequate assistance provided. The members of the department are in direct touch with the schools of the state, and can do much to aid and direct in an intelligent way the educational work. We urge, therefore, that additional help be provided.

4. Special aid should be given to the rural schools. It is the testimony of the county superintendents that the \$150 aid has done much to improve the physical conditions of the schools. Special aid is given to other schools coming up to certain requirements. It is but fair, therefore, to recognize the same need in the rural schools.

### *The school and the home.*

The committee desires to call attention to a goal which should be before us in all our educational work—the proper relation between the school and the home. It should ever be kept in mind that the school is not an institution for itself, but that it exists for the purpose of aiding the home in its all-important task of bringing up the children. It should be the aim of the school to send the children home at the end of the day, at the end of the year, and at the completion of the course, with the desire to be of service in the home and in the community. Not only should the work of the school itself be practical, that is, adapted to the needs of the community, but all through school life there should be instilled in the children the spirit of service and a willingness to be of help in doing the common every day duties of home life. We note with pleasure that efforts are also being made



in other states in this direction. In Oregon a movement has been started to have the school give credit for the performance of home duties. Whether official credits are given or not, the teacher should always give recognition to this work and in this way impress upon the children that work in the home well done is a part of a person's education.

The present Course of Study for the country schools should be revised and reorganized in order to better meet the needs of the schools in fitting children for life upon the farm. The Course at present is over-crowded. It is impossible for one teacher to do well all of the work in all of the subjects outlined. City schools having one teacher to a grade do not attempt to complete all of the work outlined by the Course of Study for the country schools. Some of the subject matter should be eliminated, especially in arithmetic and grammar; other matter should be simplified; and in other cases matter closely allied to farm life should be substituted for that which is so far removed from the life of the child that it is beyond his comprehension. This revision of the Course of Study should not be done hurriedly, but it should be done with much care and might well occupy the attention of a special committee for two or more years, so that the work shall be effectively done.

### *Summary.*

The following is a summary of our recommendations:

1. The home and the school should be brought into the closest relation possible. It should be the aim of the institutions that are training teachers to impress this relationship upon the students and to give practical suggestions to show how this aim may be accomplished.

2. The use of the schoolhouse for the purpose of holding meetings of various kinds should be encouraged and all who have to do with school activities should do everything possible to make these meetings the means of developing the powers that lie hidden in the people of the community. These meetings may be of various kinds—school entertainments, debating societies, spelling bees, literary clubs, farmers' clubs, etc.

3. The consolidation movement should be encouraged wherever possible. The question itself should be discussed among the peo-

ple and the law should be simplified and made more definite regarding transportation and state aid.

4. The Course of Study should be carefully revised and reorganized.

5. A county board of education should be provided having powers of general supervision over the schools of the county. This board should hire the superintendent just as a local board now hires the teacher, and furnish his office with the equipment and assistance that would be necessary. Such a board would work with the local boards and in this way the people could accomplish results that are now impossible. The county board of education would look upon school affairs from a broader view-point and would be the proper body to take in charge the changing of district boundaries. It is the belief of the committee that such a board would add greatly to the powers of the people themselves, for they could then through this representative board direct the educational policies of the schools.

6. More state aid should be given the elementary schools—this aid to be granted providing certain standards are maintained. Provision should also be made for some special fund for transportation purposes so that these so-called special aids may not be taken out of the regular apportionment.

7. A law should be enacted requiring all teachers after January 1st, 1915, to have at least one year of definite professional training, such course to be preceded by a reasonable academic preparation—say two years beyond the elementary school course. This year's training should include work that will be of greatest value to the person who prepares for teaching a country school.

8. In planning for higher school work for country communities, effort should be made to develop the centers we now have by adding grades and by administering the course to meet the needs of the people.

9. The area for local school tax levy should be made larger, thereby equalizing the tax burden.

10. The compulsory attendance law should be amended in some way so that the state will take recognition of the children living beyond the two-mile limit. Facilities should be provided so that this law can be more rigidly enforced.

11. Additional help could profitably be provided for the state superintendent's office.

It will be seen that not all of the above recommendations require legislative action. We can improve the schools by the action of the legislature; but much of the improvement after all rests with the people themselves in their various communities, and it is the duty of the state to so administer its schools that each community can work to the greatest advantage.

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